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Fisheries and aquaculture in Europe

Marine data: a single network for users

Aquaculture: European organic standards

Consultation on reform: the last lap

Gdansk-Gdynia: two Baltic ports

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Calendar

Shows and exhibitions

Med Seafood & Processing, Rimini (Italy), 19-22 February 2011
> For more information:
Website: www.medseafood.it

Sinaval-Eurofishing, Bilbao (Spain), 12-14 April 2011
> For more information:
Website: www.bilbaoexhibitioncentre.com

Institutional agenda

Committee on Fisheries, European Parliament, Brussels (Belgium)
- 1 February 2011
- 15-16 March 2011
- 12-13 April 2011

> For more information:
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E-mail: ip-PECH@europarl.europa.eu

Agriculture and Fisheries Council of the European Union
- 21-22 February 2011 (Brussels)
- 17-18 March 2011 (Brussels)
- 14-15 April 2011 (Luxembourg)

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Note to readers
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E-mail: fisheries-magazine@ec.europa.eu

- Website of Maria Damanaki, Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries > http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/damanaki/index_en.htm
- Application: the European Maritime Atlas > http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeatlas
- Fisheries site > http://ec.europa.eu/fisheries
- Maritime Affairs site > http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs

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Marine Knowledge 2020: enhancing understanding of our seas and oceans to stimulate competitiveness and growth

Fisheries, coastal development, navigation and offshore energy generation all take place in the seas and oceans; they have an impact on the marine environment, but also require knowledge of this environment to continue to develop on a sustainable basis. The marine consequences of climate change, such as changes of temperature, salinity and flow, affect not only coasts but also inland areas. At the same time, technological advances offer new opportunities to benefit, sustainably and responsibly and in the interest of humanity, from the many still largely untapped marine resources.

To understand these changes, foresee future developments and unlock this potential, there is a need to study the past and present changes in the oceans. This realisation prompts European public bodies to spend more than one billion euro every year collecting marine data, in particular to ensure safe navigation, protect coasts, discover new biomaterials and assess fish stocks. However, at present, such data are too diffuse, not shared as much as they could be and too fragmented in terms of standards, formats and nomenclature. This situation restricts opportunities to develop innovative new products and services based on such data. A large majority of professionals in this area are convinced that action at European Union level is the only way to enable those whose work relies on rapidly available marine data to achieve the goals of sustainable and smart growth set by the Europe 2020 strategy.

The European Commission's proposal detailed in this issue shows how an integrated approach relying on a wide range of legal instruments can contribute to the gradual creation of a structure that collects and assembles observations in order to offer stakeholders a full set of marine data that meets their needs. All these measures will give industry and public bodies the means to attain the vital economic growth objectives of the Europe 2020 strategy.

Reform of the common fisheries policy is also running its course, with a view to implementation at the start of 2013. 2010 came to a close with the final round of consultations. Fisheries stakeholders met last November in Brussels, where some demonstrated that another future is possible for European fisheries. The article in this issue gives further details.

The Editor

Fact file

Marine Knowledge 2020 strategy: for smart and sustainable growth

The Marine Knowledge 2020 strategy aims to make data from observation of the marine environment available to all users through an integrated and interconnected computerised network.

Improving knowledge of the seas and oceans that make up more than two thirds of our planet is crucial for giving European academia and industry the means to develop innovative products and services and to achieve the European Union's growth targets for 2020. One of the three cross-cutting tools of the European Union's integrated maritime policy is the development of a marine data and observation network. At present, the collection of marine data is highly fragmented and data sharing is limited. A recent communication from the European Commission focuses on solutions to this problem.

The marine environment has a tremendous influence on Europeans' daily life. Each and every one of us is dependent on what happens on or in the seas. Ocean currents affect the climate. Fisheries and aquaculture are an important source of protein-rich foods. A large part of global trade is transported by oceans and the energy we consume will increasingly come from the sea. Making the most of all this potential requires better knowledge and understanding of its evolution. Thousands of European scientists tackle that task day by day, tracking the state of fish stocks, pollution, currents, seabeds, etc.

The production of marine knowledge begins with observation of the seas and oceans. Fisheries research institutes take samples to learn about the distribution of different age groups in fish stocks; oceanographers bore cores of sediments to study their composition; maritime traffic surveillance centres monitor shipping routes by satellite and radar to improve the organisation of junctions and difficult corridors. This is what is known as data collection. The data are then analysed and classified to create information and knowledge.

The following phase concerns the exploitation of knowledge. Scientists use this data to draw knowledge or applications from it. Data from fisheries samples are used to determine the quantities of fish that can be caught from a given stock. Data from marine sediments are used to identify biodiversity loss and to determine the causes based on the presence of different types of pollution. Maritime traffic data are used to identify navigation corridors and to improve the organisation of maritime traffic and maritime spatial planning.

Obstacles

The Marine Knowledge 2020 strategy [1] focuses on the phase of data collection, analysis, assembly, storage and availability to scientists responsible for using them. A consultation of stakeholders who use these data in industry, universities and public services identified obstacles to optimal exploitation of the data collected.

(1) COM(2010) 461 – Communication on Marine Knowledge 2020. Marine data and observation for smart and sustainable growth.

EMODnet: the network of networks

The commitment to create a single gateway to marine data will become a reality in a network dubbed the *European Marine Observation and Data Network* (EMODnet). The aim is to make EMODnet an integrated and interoperable network through which users will have access to all European marine data, observations and statistics. It will in fact be a system of systems, since EMODnet is meant to bring together all existing and future marine observation systems.

For such a network to be effective and to fulfil its goal of providing single and rapid access, all its data will have to be formatted in the same way. EMODnet therefore requires the development of a common data policy, including the creation of common monitoring protocols, common quality standards, description formats, etc. It is based on the INSPIRE Directive.

This major undertaking is currently in the testing stage with development of the prototype ur-EMODnet. The prototype is being built by laboratories divided into four thematic groups: hydrography/bathymetry, geology, biology and chemistry. The groups are currently assembling and organising existing data and making them accessible to all users through four thematic portals. In the process, data are being harmonised in terms of format and quality. This involves a great deal of coordination and evaluation. The final assessment in 2013 will help create a blueprint for the future development of this network.

By 2013, the number of sea basins covered and the number of parameters taken into account will increase to permit broader conclusions and gradual widening of the scope of the prototype.

Certain conclusions on the future network can already be drawn from progress achieved to date. It is now clear that the data collection philosophy will have to evolve: marine data is collected and formatted at present with a specific purpose in mind (for example, to estimate a fish stock). In the future, data will have to be more neutral and exploitable for different purposes. They will have to remain associated with their source, responsible for their protection. For the purposes of this future network, data will have to be grouped according to themes (for example: geological layers or chemical contaminants). The collection and classification of data will also have to be coordinated at the levels of regional seas and by a central secretariat.

The first obstacle is ascertaining what data already exists. There is no system for notifying users about what data has been collected. It is therefore entirely possible, for instance, for two research institutes from two different countries to collect samples in the same sea. Nor are there any common rules on data storage. How long are data kept and are available before being deleted?

The second obstacle is restricted access to certain data. Rules of procedure prohibit some organisations from transferring their data beyond their own walls. Their use by other organisations or by external scientists therefore becomes very difficult and obtaining authorisations takes time.

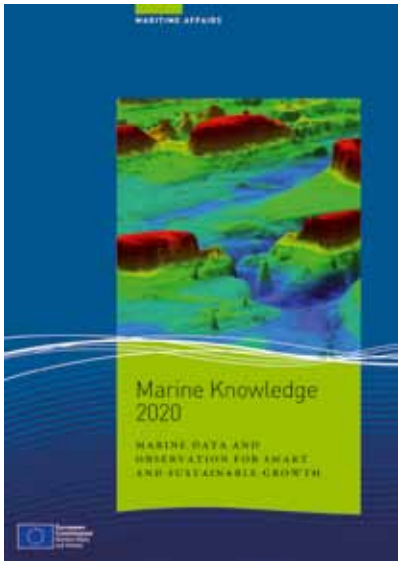
The third obstacle is data compatibility. From one country to the next, there are different ways of collecting, describing, measuring, classifying and storing data, of rounding figures, and so on. Implementing similar data collected by two different organisations can sometimes represent a sizeable challenge.

Integrating networks

The solution to all these problems would be to tear down the walls that separate national and sector-specific collection systems and to ensure that all data are available without delay to all scientists and private industries, whatever their specializations. In other words, today's fragmented system needs to be replaced by an integrated and interconnected system.

This is the philosophy that underpins the integrated maritime policy. The creation of such a data and observation network is one of the three cross-cutting tools of the European Union's integrated maritime policy, along with maritime spatial planning and integrated maritime surveillance.

The three objectives of such integration are to reduce costs and delays involved in accessing data, to boost competitiveness and innovation by offering wider access to quality, rapidly available and consistent marine data, and to improve the reliability of knowledge of the seas and oceans.



For more information, consult the brochure on this new strategy on http://ec.europa.eu/maritimeaffairs

Streamlining the system will reduce data collection costs, which amount to upwards of one billion euro today. The savings are cautiously estimated at around 30 %, or EUR 300 million a year for the European Union as a whole.

In addition, better access to knowledge will enable private industry to develop new products and services and thus to create new jobs of a kind difficult to anticipate beforehand. Public authorities will be able to base their decisions on more solid information. Lastly, scientists will have better sources of data on which to develop their research.

All these aims are in line with those of the Europe 2020 strategy.

Improving what exists

European regulations already organise the collection of different types of marine and maritime data, and in some cases impose certain availability criteria. The Member States are obliged to monitor and report on the environmental status of their maritime waters through the WISE-Marine network, to share geographical data on the basis of common standards and to report their fisheries figures. They must also submit their environmental and security measurements to the global GMES (2) initiative. Data is also collected by the European Maritime Safety Agency, the European Fisheries Agency and the European Environment Agency. Member States and even regions, especially maritime regions, also collect data as part of integrated coastal zone management.

This is the direction the Commission intends to take. It has therefore set up a programme to improve existing data collection systems by 2013. In some cases, this will mean improving the quality of data and in others widening access or encouraging the disclosure of data. Over the longer term, these measures will contribute to the establishment of common standards and do away with restrictions on data access.

For example, the Commission plans to require greater availability for data collected under programmes financed by the European Union. It also plans to promote coastal information systems as part of integrated coastal zone management projects. Eurostat will develop better parameters for identifying more effectively coastal influence in territorial statistics, and so on. The list is still being added to.

The Commission notes that, over the longer term, true integration of marine knowledge will require an additional step. A network will have to be designed, based on assessments of pilot projects such as ur-EMODnet, the prototype platform developed by the European Union, and MyOcean, the maritime dimension of the global GMES initiative.

The final objective is to provide full access to all marine data and observations. With such a tool, users will know what exists and be better able to steer and develop future data collection. Scientific knowledge of seas and oceans will also be improved because creating a more solid data environment will make it easier to plan for future changes across all marine systems in relation, for example, to climate change, species movements, biodiversity patterns, the absorption of pollution, etc. Lastly and most importantly, in an interconnected global economy, knowledge is the driver for sustainable growth, in keeping with the Europe 2020 strategy.

For more information:
https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/maritimeforum/node/1305

(2) Global Monitoring for Environment and Security Initiative.

Reform: heading towards 2013

Two European Commissioners, Maria Damanaki (Maritime Affairs and Fisheries) and Janez Potočnik (Environment), addressed the stakeholders' conference.

On 16 November 2010, the European Commission sponsored a major conference, 'Another future for fisheries'. This event marked a new stage in preparation of the common fisheries policy reform. It was meant to give stakeholders the opportunity to share their pioneering experiences with various aspects of this policy.

The new reform of the common fisheries policy was launched in April 2009 with a wide-ranging consultation. The public was invited to submit views on the key challenges ahead for the European fisheries sector. These challenges were outlined in a green paper describing the situation and discussing options for maintaining the economic, social and environmental sustainability of fisheries.

For nearly nine months, European citizens and fisheries operators submitted their contributions on the options discussed in the green paper. During this period, Commission officials took part in more than 100 meetings in the field, which enabled them to meet players, share information and debate problems and solutions with them. A second round of meetings, public debates, seminars and conferences was held in 2010, with the participation of institutions, stakeholders and NGOs.

This consultation brought to light four key areas of the common fisheries policy (CFP) that need to be addressed by the reform:

- the first is to tackle the problem of overfishing and safeguard the marine environment while complying with sustainable fishing levels, reducing discards and minimizing the impact of fisheries on the ecosystem;
- the second is to bring about change in CFP decision-making ('governance') so that it is better suited to realities on the ground and enhancing the sector's involvement;
- the third is to reduce fleet overcapacity and adapt capacity to the availability of resources, while giving certain fisheries the option to introduce individual transferable quotas;
- the fourth is to put in place a financial instrument that serves only the objectives of the reformed CFP and puts an end to measures to assist the fleet.

A large number of participants agreed on the need for a strong external dimension, more competitive and dynamic European aquaculture, a market and commercial policy as a strong pillar of the CFP, greater consideration for small-scale coastal fisheries and the integration of fisheries in the ecosystem-based maritime policy.

The Commission gave those concerned a final chance to come together on 16 November in Brussels. The presence of two European Commissioners whose competences are closely affected by fisheries activities – Maria Damanaki (Maritime Affairs and Fisheries) and Janez Potočnik (Environment) – exemplified the scope of the challenges at the heart of this reform.

Eight projects in different geographical areas and on different aspects of the reform were presented at workshops and followed by a debate: stakeholder involvement, individual transferable quotas, reduction of discards, innovation, women's role, sustainable aquaculture, consumption and the Mediterranean. The ideas presented at the conference showed that the goal of a thorough reform can be met. These stakeholders proved that an innovative, greener and simpler policy is possible.

In the wake of this final stage of consultation, an initial legislative package is expected to be proposed towards mid-2011. After around two years of discussions and debates within the European institutions, final adoption of the reform is likely in late 2012, with implementation beginning on 1 January 2013.

Gdansk and Gdynia: two ports expanding side-by-side

At the heart of the Baltic Sea, the port of Gdansk enjoys outstanding natural conditions: deep waters (16.5 metres), no tides and ice-free conditions in winter. There have been two major foreign investments in the port in recent years. Its smaller but dynamic neighbour, Gdynia, is striving to attract more cargo ships.

Huge cranes hover over and are visible from the old town like good fairies keeping watch over the historic centre of Gdansk. The port's proximity is impossible to ignore. The houses that line its cobblestone streets are a reminder of the commercial ties built by Gdansk, with other European ports, in particular Rotterdam, from as early as the 15th century. The red bricks used to build most of the town's buildings and its many churches come from Holland: placed as ballast in the hold of commercial ships to make them more stable, the bricks were then sold in Gdansk.

Just a stone's throw from the old town, the *Stocznia Gdanska* shipyards cover hundreds of hectares. It was here that the riots of 1970 broke out and that the Solidarnosc movement emerged in the 1980s. Ships are still built here (container vessels, gas tankers, trawlers and so on) as well as all sorts of steel products, especially wind turbine masts. On the 70 hectares of the site not in use today, the Gdansk town hall plans to build a European solidarity centre to commemorate the struggles for freedom that took place here.

A bit further, the Vistula Canal separates the inland port from the northern port, built in the early 1970s. Visitors can cross the canal on the ferry used by port employees. Situated along the oxbow of the Vistula and the canal, the inland port can handle roll-on/roll-off ships (Ro-Ro) carrying cargoes of raw materials, such as steel, fertiliser, cereals and coal. Only 10 % of ships use this port, which nevertheless benefited from projects part-financed by the European Union between 2004 and 2008, including modernisation of its entry and expansion of the ferry docks.

Activity at Gdansk is based mainly at the northern port, which opens onto the Gulf of Gdansk. A small road lined with birch trees leads to ultramodern terminals. In 2009, traffic at this port reached a total of 24 million tonnes (coal, copper, iron, cereals, liquid fuel, etc.), according to the Gdansk Port Authority. Some choices proved to be risky: the cereals terminal has never been used and the coal terminal is idling.

Large investments nevertheless help kick-start declining activities. In 2007, an Australian fund invested EUR 200 million in the construction of a deepwater container terminal (DCT), a bold gamble. Everything is brand new here: the road that leads to the terminal, the twin-track railway behind the huge platform facing the sea and, of course, the offices of the terminal's 300 employees. The Danish shipping firm Maersk, looking for ways to ride out the crisis, chose the DCT as a departure and arrival point for a new commercial route, the AE10, which connects China directly to the Baltic. *'The first ship from China reached Gdansk in January. Growth since then has been phenomenal: 180 % this year',* explains Boris Wenzel, CEO of the DCT. A total of some 240 000 TEU (1) containers were transhipped in 2009. The figure will be upwards of 400 000 TEU for 2010. These containers are filled with all kinds of goods: furniture, household appliances, fertilisers and even fresh produce. Gdansk has become Poland's leading container port.

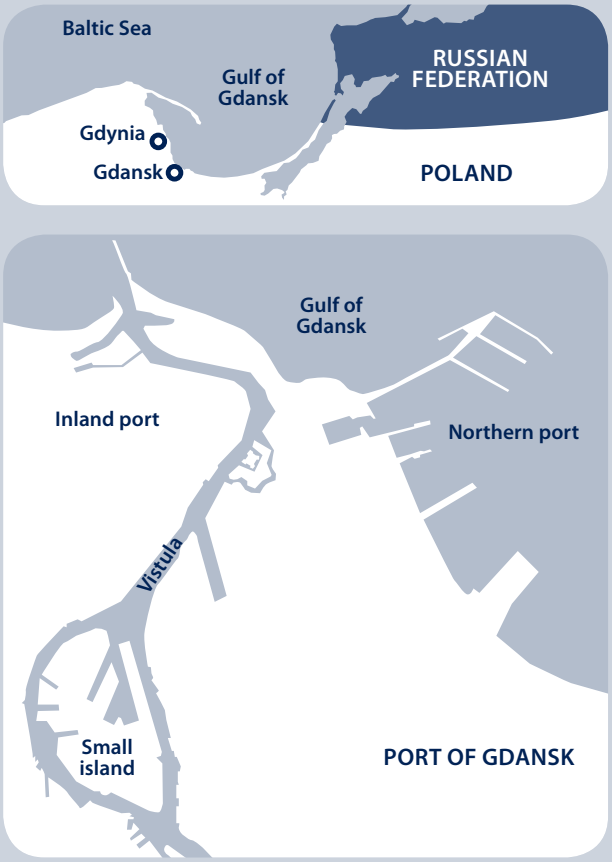
Major infrastructure works are on the drawing board to speed up the port's development. Public funds, both local and European, are helping to finance a road that will connect the port to the airport in 2012, and two other roads will make it easier to move around the port. *'We are revitalising the belt around the Vistula',* Iwona Bierut, Director for Economic Affairs at the Gdansk Town Hall, says with satisfaction. *'And nearly 300 hectares are awaiting investments in Gdansk',* notes Julian Skelnik, Director of Development at the Gdansk Port Authority.

The port of Gdansk also has two ferry terminals – the Polferries terminal and a more recent terminal situated on the peninsula of Westerplatte, less than half an hour from the historic centre. Passengers are mostly Swedish and come to visit the old town and the region, especially the Malbork castle, once the seat of the Teutonic knights. Ferries transported 200 000 passengers last year.

Why two ports?

In 1919, Gdansk became a free city under the German name of Danzig. Deprived of its port, Poland decided to develop a new maritime outlet. It chose the village of Gdynia, 20 km from Danzig. The port was built in 1922 and expanded rapidly, handling the majority of Baltic maritime traffic by 1937.

(1) Twenty-foot equivalent units (a standard measure of container capacity).



Port activity at Gdansk is divided between the inland port on the Vistula Canal and the northern port, seen here, which opens directly onto the Gulf of Gdansk.

Gdansk and Gdynia at a glance

(sources: Gdansk and Gdynia Port Authorities)

Gdansk

- 450 000 inhabitants.
- 2 500 employees.
- 24 million tonnes of traffic in 2009.
- 2 major investments: deepwater container terminal (DCT) built in 2007 and dry bulk cargo terminal acquired by the Belgian firm Sea Invest.

Gdynia

- 250 000 inhabitants.
- 2 200 employees.
- 14.2 million tonnes of traffic in 2009.
- 2 privatised terminals: Baltic Container Terminal, sold for EUR 40 million to the Philippines-based group ICSI, and Baltic Grain terminal, sold for EUR 10 million to Dutch and Polish investors.
- Tourism (cruise ships): 135 000 passengers in 2009.

Gdynia, the other hub

Some 20 kilometres away, Gdynia, the neighbouring port developed in 1922, intends to stay in the race. *'Gdynia was a major port. During the Communist era, it was specialised in freight, while Gdansk mostly handled coal and fuel',* explains Janusz Jarosinski, President of the Gdynia Port Authority for 20 years. Traffic in 2009 stood at 14.2 million tonnes: 65 % general cargo, 15 % cereals (soy, wheat), 10 % coal and 10 % bulk (fertilisers, chemical products). Gdynia also has a very active ferry route between Poland and Sweden and has opened a new motorway of the sea between Germany and Poland. The port handled 135 000 cruise ship passengers in 2009, according to Port Authority statistics.

The Port Authority, which here too is run by the Polish State, has opted for privatisation and is opening up firms to foreign investors. *'Privatisation was the right choice',* explains Janusz Jarosinski. *'In two years, all the port terminals will be in the hands of private companies. The money from the privatisations belongs to the port, which still owns the land. This money can only be spent on developing its infrastructures.'* As a result, with 75 % funding from the European Union, the port was able to finance a section of road that links the town to the port. Here too, major development programmes are being studied. Gdynia, confined to a limited area, has major expansion projects, including digging a canal to increase its depths. *'We plan to invest EUR 140 million over the next four years to be able to attract larger ships',* explains Janusz Jarosinski.

In recent years, the ports of Gdansk and Gdynia, both open to foreign capital, have successfully promoted their respective strengths: Gdynia is counting on the modernisation of its infrastructures, while Gdansk is aiming for geographical development, given the immense expanse of land still available for development within its port. European Maritime Day will take place in Gdansk in May 2011.

A common standard for European organic aquaculture

European consumers will now be able to identify the organic aquaculture products that meet European organic production standards. The aim is to guarantee the production of high quality foods while limiting the impact on the aquatic environment.

The Regulation on organic aquaculture animal (fish, molluscs, crustaceans) and seaweed production entered into force on 1 July 2010. Certification in the Member States used to be based on private standards or national specifications, but the new Regulation imposes minimum criteria to be used in all countries of the European Union.

Regulation (710/2009 (1)) on organic aquaculture animal and seaweed production has been in force since July in all Member States of the European Union (EU). The existence of a common standard based on minimum criteria will help to improve the identification of organic aquaculture animals. The new EU logo for organic products, the 'Euro-leaf' *(see photo above and box)*, must be affixed to pre-packaged organic aquaculture products produced in the EU. Member States used to be able to draw up their own specifications through national regulations or rely on private standards.

Private operators are predominant in the EU: there are 10 in all, but only a handful, like Naturland, are present in more than one Member State. Only two countries – Denmark since 2004 and France since 2007 – have national laws on organic aquaculture. Ireland drafted legislation in 2007 but left it dormant pending adoption of the European text. This lack of uniformity makes procedures complex and exports costly since it multiplies the number of audits. With the new Regulation, it will now be possible to market pre-packaged organic aquaculture products under a single logo throughout the EU internal market.

This innovative Regulation covers all types of fresh water and marine animal production: fish, obviously, but also crustaceans, molluscs and even seaweed. *'No earlier text permitted the labelling of organic seaweed',* notes Jean-François Arbona, of C-Weed Aquaculture, a firm specialised in the production of sea plants. *'This regulation also makes possible the existence of aquaculture (shellfish, crustaceans, etc.) under an organic label that encourages producers by adding value to good environmental practice.'*

Reducing farming density

The new production standards ensure the welfare of farmed fish. The densities imposed by the European text are in line with those generally set by existing organic certification standards and are much stricter than those for conventional production. For salmon, for example, Europe's largest organic aquaculture production, the density of an organic farm cannot exceed 10 kg/m^3 in sea water, compared with 70 kg/m^3 with conventional production.

Dr Giuseppe Lembo (COISPA Tecnologia & Ricerca) is an expert in fish welfare in aquaculture. In his view, the maximum stocking densities authorised in the European Union represent a balanced compromise between welfare, high quality and profitability. *'Today there is a growing interest in the welfare of farmed fish',* he explains. *'And more and more fish farmers are becoming aware that, over and above a question of ethics, the success of their production is at stake. The concept of minimum space for fish is more complex than for terrestrial animals and there are many inter-species differences as regards the need for space and stocking density tolerance.'*

For Ireland, one of the EU's largest producers, this standard will not lead to any changes, however. *'Ireland was a pioneer, launching organic aquaculture at the beginning of the 90s',* notes Richie Flynn of the Irish Farmers' Association (IFA). *'So criteria for low density, the procurement of fish from sustainable fisheries and the location of fish farms are already being met. Some of our criteria are even stricter than those set by the Regulation.'*

The same low density requirement is laid down in the Regulation for production of sea bream and sea bass. Density is restricted to a maximum of 15 kg of fish per m^3. For the Greek company Kefalonia Fisheries, founded in 1981 as the first organic fish farm for sea bass and sea bream, the new text will not lead to any major changes. *'Our organic aquaculture production is certified by Naturland, which imposes certain additional criteria that go beyond the European legislation',* explains Sales Manager Efi Moustaka.

Stricter framework for farming techniques

To guarantee that organic fish farms remain as close to nature as possible, the Regulation prohibits the use of hormones. This ban has a major impact on certain farms, which previously used hormonal induction for fish reproduction. This is the case for carp produced mainly in Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Poland. The ban will also affect the production of sturgeon in Spain and France as well as tilapia, a fish found in a number of

(1) Commission Regulation (EC) No 710/2009 of 5 August 2009 amending Regulation (EC) No 889/2008 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Council Regulation (EC) No 834/2007 as regards laying down detailed rules on organic aquaculture animal and seaweed production.

organic fish farms in the Netherlands. Here too, however, fish farm operators have three years to develop a reproduction process that meets the new criteria (2).

Following the Regulation's entry into force, the triploidisation of organic aquaculture animals, a process that sterilizes females, no longer corresponds to the objectives and principles of organic production set out in EU rules. *'Triploidisation was authorised until recently in France and used widely in organic farms that produce large trout for smoking',* explains Marine Levadoux, technical officer for the Interbranch Technical Committee on Aquaculture Products (*Comité interprofessionnel des produits de l'aquaculture* – CIPA). From now on, large organic smoked trout will have to come from sea-based farms, which do not exist in France at present. However, it may be possible to use a selection process to skirt round this difficulty.

For bivalve molluscs (oysters, mussels, etc.), the on-growing areas authorised are strictly supervised. The same holds true for seaweed harvesting areas. *'Transposition of the Regulation has made this point even more restrictive, with the result that now only 20 % of Brittany's coasts are eligible',* observes Jean-François Arbona.

Preserving adaptation periods

It is important to note that the regulation does not impose an abrupt change on existing fish farms. Adaptation periods are established: organic fish farms have until 2013 to meet the criteria in certain cases spelled out by the Regulation. On the other hand, any new organic farm will have to comply with the European specifications immediately. The new rules apply on a progressive basis. The Regulation states, for example, that 80 % of juveniles can still be non-organic in 2010 and 50 % in 2013. It is not until 2015 that all juveniles will have to be organic.

Taking into account the diversity of geographical situations in the countries of the Union, the Regulation seeks to achieve a smooth transition in order to avoid difficulties for operators. The aim is to introduce genuinely 'organic' standards but without excessive constraints. A single operator, for instance, may run an organic fish farm and a conventional fish farm if certain physical separation conditions are complied with. However, the Regulation does not impose a minimum separation distance, leaving it to Member State authorities to define physical separation rules based on local production conditions. The idea is to give operators a fair amount of room for manœuvre. The text also provides for the possibility of revising certain points from mid-2013 if requests from the Member States are technically acceptable.

With this new Regulation, the organic aquaculture products that meet European organic production standards will be clearly identified for European consumers. The aim is to guarantee the production of wholesome and high quality foods while reducing to a minimum the impact on the aquatic environment. This legislation will improve the competitiveness of organic aquaculture products by lowering the cost of placing them on the market. Due to the absence of cross-border labelling systems in Europe, operators used to have to bear the costs of re-certification of products they wished to sell in other Member States. Those costs become a thing of the past with the harmonisation resulting from the European 'organic' Regulation.

For more information: **www.organicfarming.eu**

The new organic logo also applies to aquaculture

The new European organic logo gives consumers a guarantee that food products meet European organic production standards. The logo, dubbed the 'Euro-leaf' because it represents a leaf made up of the EU stars against a green background *(see photo page 10),* will also be found on organic pre-packaged fish. The still recent but already mandatory logo has been gradually introduced on packaging since 1 July 2010.

Organic aquaculture at a glance

Source: Bergleiter S. *et al., Organic Aquaculture 2009 – Production and Markets,* Naturland e.V. & Organic Services GmbH, 2009

- **123:** the number of certified organic fish farms in Europe in 2008.
- **50 000 tonnes:** organic aquaculture production in the European Union in 2008, half of global production.
- **5 main producer countries in the EU:** United Kingdom, Ireland, Hungary, Greece and France.
- **Salmon:** the main species farmed organically.

(2) Under certain conditions, the competent authority may authorise for a period of three years, those aquaculture animal and seaweed production units that already operate under nationally accepted organic rules before entry into force of Regulation 710/2009, to keep their organic production status while adapting to the rules of the new regulation.

KL-AG-10-050-EN-C

In brief

Baltic Sea TACs: increase for cod, decrease for pelagic species

In the Baltic Sea, the good state of cod stocks and the poor state of pelagic stocks call for major changes to fishing opportunities for 2011. At the proposal of the Commission, total allowable catches (TACs) for cod were increased, while those for herring and sprat were cut significantly. For **cod**, the eastern stock is reaping the benefits of the management plan, enhanced control measures and high recruitment. In keeping with the plan, the TACs were raised by 15 %, from 51 267 tonnes to 58 957 tonnes. The western stock is showing a slight improvement, making possible a 6 % increase in the TACs, from 17 700 tonnes to 18 800 tonnes, also in keeping with the plan. Unlike cod, **small pelagic species** are showing signs of decline as recruitment continues to shrink. For herring, the central and western stocks are experiencing the largest declines in biomass. The western stock has even sunk to a record low. At the proposal of the Commission, the TACs for western herring were cut by 30 %, from 22 690 to 15 884 tonnes. The TACs for the central stock, the largest, were reduced by 15 %, from 126 380 to 107 420 tonnes (the Commission had proposed a 28 % reduction). The TACs for herring for the Gulf of Bothnia were increased by 1 % (104 369 tonnes) while those for the Gulf of Riga (36 400 tonnes) did not change, in spite of the Commission's wish to cut them by 12 % and 10 % respectively. For sprat (a single stock for the entire Baltic), the decrease is 24 % (from 379 900 to 288 766 tonnes), compared with the Commission's proposal of 30 %. For **salmon**, the TACs for the stock in the main basin were reduced by 15 % due to the decrease in the survival rate of young fish at sea and the poor state of certain river stocks (from 294 246 to 250 109 tonnes). The TACs for the Gulf of Finland stock were not cut (15 419 tonnes) since the causes of the problem need to be addressed more in inland waters than at sea.

A roadmap for integrated maritime surveillance

Monitoring and tracking systems already in use at sea (maritime safety and security, protection of the marine environment, fisheries control, control of external borders, etc.) still operate in a fragmented way. In 2009, the European Commission published a Communication (COM(2009) 538) announcing its wish to achieve further integration of these services to improve their efficiency. The Commission organised a group of Member State experts tasked with setting up a common information sharing environment or CISE. At the request of Member States, the Commission presented a roadmap on 20 October 2010 (COM(2010) 584) that outlines the stages of development of the CISE for 2012. The process will involve six stages, from identification of all the user communities (end 2010) to definition of mutual access rights to certain predefined data (2012). Implementation of the roadmap will determine the next steps towards setting up the CISE.

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